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COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Seventeenth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 359th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 25 July 1997, at 4.30 p.m.

Chairperson: Ms. KHAN

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CLOSURE OF THE SESSION

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The meeting was called to order at 4.40 p.m.

IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 21 OF THE CONVENTION (continued)

Report of Working Group II (CEDAW/C/1997/II/WG.II/WP.1)

1. Document CEDAW/C/1997/II/WG.II/WP.1, as amended, was adopted.

WAYS AND MEANS OF EXPEDITING THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE (continued)

Report of Working Group I (CEDAW/C/1997/II/WG.I/WP.1)

2. Document CEDAW/C/1997/II/WG.I/WP.1, as amended, was adopted.

PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE EIGHTEENTH SESSION

3. Ms. CONNORS (Deputy Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women) read out the provisional agenda for the Committee's eighteenth session.

4. The provisional agenda for the eighteenth session was adopted.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ITS SEVENTEENTH SESSION (CEDAW/C/1997/II/L.1 and Add.1-10)

5. Ms. JAVATE DE DIOS, Rapporteur, introduced the Committee's report.

CEDAW/C/1997/II/L.1 and Add.1

6. Documents CEDAW/C/1997/II/L.1 and Add.1 were adopted.

CEDAW/C/1997/II/L.1/Add.2-10

7. Documents CEDAW/C/1997/II/L.1/Add.2-10, as amended, were adopted.

8. The report of the Committee as a whole was adopted.

STATEMENT BY THE SPECIAL ADVISER ON GENDER ISSUES AND ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

9. Ms. KING (Assistant Secretary-General, Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women) said that the current session marked the first occasion on which the Committee had been able to meet for a second annual session. Considerable progress had been made in reducing the backlog of reports awaiting review, even though many of the reports were complex and additional information had been received close to or during the session. The Committee had also made considerable progress in streamlining its working methods to allow for a more concentrated approach and the timely dispatch of documentation to the Office of Conference and Support Services.

10. The Committee had also adopted a revolutionary approach with respect to non-governmental organizations and their contribution to its work. Two informal

meetings had been held to enable non-governmental organizations to brief the Committee on the situation in countries which had presented reports during the current session. A procedure had also been introduced under which non-governmental organizations were able to provide the Committee with specialized information that could be helpful in the elaboration of its general recommendations. The Committee's openness to non-governmental organizations and civil society signalled a commendably transparent approach which was likely to heighten knowledge of the Convention and strengthen its implementation in States parties throughout the world. The input of non-governmental organizations should also allow the Committee to formulate a practical and concrete general recommendation on article 21 concerning women's right to health.

11. She wished to reaffirm her commitment and that of her colleagues to supporting the Committee in its work. In that connection, one of the priorities of the plan of work of the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Centre for Human Rights was the mainstreaming of gender into the work of the treaty regime, a task in which the Committee had a central role to play. The Committee's views on the report of the independent expert, Professor Philip Alston, should also make an important contribution to the discussion of the report.

12. The Division had put in place a system for keeping the Chairperson apprised of new developments and matters of interest to the Committee. At the Chairperson's suggestion, it would pursue the matter of overdue initial and subsequent reports of States parties with a view to meeting the target for the year 2000 set at the Fourth World Conference on Women. The Division also maintained a Web site on the Internet and an electronic mail system. The Committee's Web site was linked to the Web site of the Centre for Human Rights in order to expedite access by users to information on the human rights treaty regime as a whole.

CLOSURE OF THE SESSION

13. After an exchange of courtesies, the CHAIRPERSON declared the session closed.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.